Personality Transcendence as a Predictor of Students' Crying Reasons

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ABSTRACT: Personality, as a relatively stable pattern of characteristics and behaviors, may subject to changes toward fall or transcendence during life under the influence of different factors such as changes in beliefs. As one of the demonstrations of change in personality is manifested in an individual's emotions, and as 'crying' is one of the tools to arouse emotions, the present research aimed at studying the relationship between personality transcendence with different reasons for crying. For this purpose, 200 individuals (120 females and 80 males) were selected among Persian Gulf University students using multistage cluster sampling. They were requested to fill out Pakizeh Scale of Personality Transcendence and Pakizeh Scale of Crying Reasons. The findings showed that personality transcendence is positively and significantly predictor of crying as an indicator of mental strength and crying as an indicator of natural emotions. It is inversely predictor of crying as an indicator of mental weakness. The results obtained from regression analysis also showed that among aspects of personality transcendence, religious beliefs and spiritual experiences are the best reversed predictors of crying as an indicator of mental weakness. Spiritual beliefs and social ethics are the best direct predictors of crying as an indicator of natural emotions. Social ethics, religious beliefs, and spiritual experiences are respectively the best direct predictors of crying as an indicator of mental strength. The findings of the present research provided a new perspective on personality transcendence, especially on its emotional aspect, and pave the way for new studies on transcendence and the relationship between transcendence and emotions.
Key words: Crying, Personality, Reasons, Transcendence

INTRODUCTION

Psychologists define personality as a relatively stable pattern of behavioral characteristics and approaches and quality of an individual's compatibility. They also believe that two main characteristics of personality which distinguish an individual form others, are individuality and uniformity. In addition to covering unique patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior, personality encompasses hidden or overt psychological mechanisms, which are also beyond these patterns. Such unique characteristics and patterns may not be observed directly or an individual may intend to hidden them from others intentionally. However, there is a broad consensus among psychologists on the development and changes of personality during childhood and adolescence; they generally recognize the interaction of temperament and experience as the factors underlying development and change in personality, but there is no consensus among them on personality change during adulthood (Evans and Rothbart, 2007). On the reasons for personality change, psychologists emphasized the role of beliefs and they called it as one of the most influential factors causing changes in personality. Some psychologists, also suggest that religious attitudes lead to some changes in personality. In other words, while reducing neurotic traits, religious attitudes improve self-esteem and personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion (Halama and Lacna, 2011).

According to some researchers, personal differences among individuals on feelings, religious and spiritual beliefs, and behaviors can be explained by the concept of transcendence. Transcendence, that has a central role at personality development, means to have a motivational life, to move away from selfishness and egocentrism, and being able to accept events and new individuals in a clear, accurate, and naturalistic manner without distortion and prejudice [9]. Seeking transcendence is an inherent desire in people to discover meaning in life, move beyond oneself, and to join somebody or something beyond oneself, and is an essential part in maturation and process of personality development. Spirituality, that includes religion and relationship with God, is also the closest construct to transcendence Piedmont (1999) believes that self-transcendence has two components of sense of connection and universality. Sense of connection means to believe that an individual is part of the big human world and his participation plays a vital role in continuation and coordination of life. Universality means believing unified entity of the whole life, spiritual prosperity, feeling happy and the joy caused by encountering of an individual with a high fact.

Montago et al. (2011) believe that self-transcendence is a personality trait, which has a significant relationship with some of the other personality traits. Cloninger (2004) also discusses spiritual aspect of transcendence as one of main

component of personality. His findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between self-transcendence, as a personality trait, and positive feelings, lack of negative emotions, quality of life, joy, and satisfaction (Cloninger, 2006). As the concept of personality is more pervasive than the concept self, and encompasses all the dimensions of human existence, including beliefs, attitudes, values, and an individual's way of life, Pakizeh discussed the concept of personality transcendence as a more pervasive construct than self-transcendence. According to Pakizeh, personality transcendence is a psychological characteristic that although, in its genuine form has roots in religious beliefs, it goes beyond mere religious beliefs. In other words, while establishing a deep relationship between creation and creator, personality transcendence leads to self-discipline, self-acceptance, finding meaning in life, helping others, receiving help from others, and accepting death. Pakizeh defined personality transcendence as a dynamic organization of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors, which are organized based on religious, spiritual, and ethical values. He also recognized nine dimensions of personality transcendence namely; individual discipline, religious beliefs, spiritual beliefs, religious behaviors, spiritual behaviors, social maturity, personal ethics, social ethics, and peak experiences.

The other concept being studied in the current research is adults crying. Crying is a type of attachment behavior in infancy and childhood that may happen due to incur of any loss at any stage of life. Adults' crying is common in both positive situations like winning sports competitions and also in negative situations like death of a beloved one. The major function of crying may be trying to make others aware of one's source of discomfort. In other words, the individual may use crying to gain the attention, sympathy, and support from others. Adults crying, like crying in childhood, may be a type of specific activity to receive supportive and caring behaviors. Adults crying or crying inhibition may reflex attachment styles, health, symptoms of physiological, mental, or social disorders or a combination of them . Two types of crying that has been introduced as adulthood crying are protested (requested) crying and sad or desperate crying, which may be internal (tearless) and/or external and in the form of weeping (Vingerhoets, 2013).

Crying can also be an effective factor for establishing communication, facilitating attachment, and strengthening connection among individuals. It can strengthen empathy, sympathy and consolation of others. Crying, even in adults, may be a symptom of inability and helplessness. In other words, it may indicate specific situations in which adults feel overwhelmed, lack of control, and inability. Pakizeh (unpublished) suggested three types of crying namely;

crying as an indicator of mental strength, crying as an indicator of natural emotions, and crying as an indicator of mental weakness. For instance, crying when being criticized is evaluated as an indicator of mental weakness, crying when grief is evaluated as an indicator of natural emotions, and it is evaluated as an indicator of mental strength when praying God. The present research was conducted to study the predictive power of personality transcendence and its nine dimensions for the reasons underlying adults crying as criterion variable. To our knowledge no research has studied the relationship between personality transcendence and adults crying reasons, so with respect to the newness of transcendence discussions within personality transcendence and its nine dimensions, and newness of adult crying issue with its three dimensions, conducting this study seemed necessary.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The current study is a descriptive correlational research, which investigates the relationship between personality transcendence and its dimensions as the predictors and students' crying reasons as the criterion variable. The statistical population includes all the Persian Gulf University students at 2013-2014 academic year. As the first step of multistage cluster sampling, 4 out of the 7 colleges were selected randomly. As the second step, two majors were selected from each college. Then, one of the classes from each major was selected as the final cluster. After receiving a general, non-directive explanation on research, the participants were asked to fill out the scales.

Instruments

Pakizeh Scale of Personality Transcendence (unpublished): This scale includes 64 items, which measures nine dimensions including personal discipline (8 items), religious beliefs (5 items), religious behaviors (4 items), social maturity (12 items), spiritual beliefs (5 items), spiritual behaviors (5 items), individual moralities (8 items), social moralities (9 items), and peak experiences (8 items). Content validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using the experts' opinions and criterion-related validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using several external similar scales. Reliability of the scale was studied using test-retest correlation coefficient in different samples and the correlations were obtained between 0.79 and 0.84.

Pakizeh Scale of Crying Reasons: This scale includes 30 items and measures three different reasons for crying and specifies three types of crying, namely; crying as an indicator of mental strength, crying as an indicator of natural emotions, and crying as an indicator of mental weakness. This scale

provides a series of situations and respondents are requested to specify how much the situations make them weep. Ten options were provided for each type of crying. Content validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using the experts' opinions. Criterion-related validity of the scale was studied and evaluated using similar external scales. Reliability of the scale was obtained using test-retest correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha as 0.76 and 0.87, respectively.

RESULTS

As shown in the table1, there are positive significant correlations between personality transcendence and all its dimensions (except social maturity) with crying as an indicator of mental strength, and crying as an indicator of natural emotions. There is also, negative significant correlation between personality transcendence and some of its dimensions including; religious beliefs, religious behaviors, spiritual beliefs, and peak experiences with crying as an indicator of mental weakness.

Stepwise regression was used to examine the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for crying reasons. Tables 2 to 4 show the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for crying reasons.

As shown in table 2, among the personality transcendence dimensions, religious beliefs ($\beta=-0.22$, $P<0.001$) and peak experiences ($\beta=-0.21$, $P<0.001$) are the best predictors of crying as an indicator of mental weakness.

As shown in the table 3, among the personality transcendence dimensions, spiritual beliefs ($\beta=0.47$, $P<0.001$) and social moralities ($\beta=0.37$, $P<0.001$) are the best predictors of crying as an indicator of natural emotions.

As shown in the table 4, among the personality transcendence dimensions, Social moralities ($\beta=0.39$, $P<0.001$), Spiritual beliefs ($\beta=0.31$, $P<0.001$), and peak experiences ($\beta=0.28$, $P<0.001$) are the best predictors of mental strength crying.

Table 1. Shows the correlations between personality transcendence dimensions with crying reasons.

Variables	Crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Crying as an indicator of mental strength
Religious beliefs	-0.22**	0.18*	0.21**
Religious behaviors	-0.15*	0.17*	0.19*
Spiritual beliefs	-0.16*	0.47**	0.39**
Spiritual behaviors	-0.08-	0.19*	0.17*
Social maturity	-0.06-	0.11-	0.11-
Personal discipline	-0.05-	0.25*	0.14*
Individual moralities	-0.07-	0.22**	0.29**
Social moralities	-0.04-	0.42**	0.39**
Peak experiences	-0.21*	0.14*	0.34**
Personality Transcendence	-0.15*	0.38**	0.41**

p<0.01   *p<0.05

Table 2. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for crying as an indicator of mental weakness

criterion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R^2	F (p)	Regression coefficients	
					Religious beliefs	Spiritual experiences
Crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Religious beliefs	0.22	0.05	9.77 (0.001)	β= -0.22 t=3.17 P<0.001	
	Peak experiences	0.28	0.08	7.38 (0.001)	β= -0.24 t=3.71 P<0.001	β= -0.21 t=3.04 P<0.001

Table 3. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for crying as an indicator of natural emotions

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R^2	F (p)	Regression coefficients	
					Spiritual beliefs	Social moralities
crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Spiritual beliefs	0.47	0.22	55.11 (0.001)	β= 0.47 t=7.45 P<0.001	
	Social moralities	0.58	0.34	49.27 (0.001)	β= 0.36 t=6.01 P<0.001	β= 0.37 t=5.85 P<0.001

Table4. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for crying as an indicator of mental strength

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R^2	F(p)	Regression coefficients		
					Social moralities	Spiritual beliefs	Peak experiences
Crying as an indicator of mental strength	Social moralities	0.39	0.16	36.18 (0.001)	B= 0.37 T=6.01 P<0.001		
	Spiritual beliefs	0.42	0.24	31.42 (0.001)	B= 0.31 T=4.73 P<0.001	B= 0.30 T=4.57 P<0.001	
	Peak experiences	0.52	0.27	26.24 (0.001)	B= 0.28 T=3.67 P<0.001	B= 0.26 T=3.44 P<0.001	B= 0.23 T=3.12 P<0.001

DISCUSSION

As explained in the Introduction section, the present research aimed at studying the predicative power of personality transcendence for different reasons for adults crying and the findings showed that personality transcendence could significantly predict the tree types of crying in adults. In other words, personality transcendence is a significantly direct predicator of crying as an indicator of mental strength, and also crying as an indicator of natural emotions. Personality transcendence also is a significantly inverse predicator of crying as an indicator of mental weakness. To explain the reversed predicting power of personality transcendence, especially it's dimensions such as religious beliefs and spiritual experiences for crying as an indicator of mental weakness, we can point out that such a crying indicates distress, negative excitements, and mental weakness; whereas, self-transcendence indicates an individual's ability to avoid mental distresses .The findings of the present research are consistent with the earlier findings that indicate those with low self-transcendence are impatient, unable to control their negative emotions, and attempt to take control of everything due to their personality problems . The research findings are also consistent with the ones indicating a negative significant relationship between self-transcendence and mental disorders and emotional problems, and the ones indicating that the individuals with high scores, in compare with individuals with low scores in self-directedness, cooperativeness and self-transcendence experience further positive emotions (Sperry, 2011).

In addition, crying as an indicator of mental weakness may indicate hopelessness and sadness, inability in coping with physical stress and confront internal contradictions, and sense of personal incapability, rage and anger, whereas the individuals with religious beliefs and behaviors have less negative emotions and frustration, Those with more peak experiences feel psychologically and physically healthier and have further ability and endurance to encounter problems. Peak experiences are predictive of life satisfaction, positive emotions, positive spiritual coping, and fewer depression symptoms. Therefore, it can be stated that having peak experience and spiritual beliefs play crucial roles in coping an individual with problems. They also play roles in improving temperament and positive emotions.

To explain the predictive power of personality transcendence, especially it's dimensions such as social moralities, spiritual beliefs and peak experiences for the crying as an indicator of mental strength, we may point out the positive psychology perspective that suggests that spirituality and transcendence include hope, optimism, religiosity, forgiveness, compassion, vitality, humor, desire, and enthusiasm . The literature also shows that crying may have a role in psychic sublimation and improve an individual's temperament and peak experience is of the major factors effective in emotional temperament and well-being. The findings also indicate that obedience and pure worship of God provide an individual with a source of ethical and emotional energy and psychic power and that transcended individuals are capable of controlling their impulses (Hartman and Zimberoff, 2008) and are able to enjoy their affairs in spite of problems, by maintaining hope for the future. The literature also has revealed that those with less self-transcendence have materialistic attitudes and values, are impatient and unable to control their negative emotions, and also, attempt to control everything due to their personality problems. Spiritual beliefs and attitudes cause enthusiasm and pave the way for realizing internal enjoyment and feeling comfort, leads to creating a special sense of unity between an individual and God or a higher power. The findings also indicate a significant relationship between self-transcendence and social interest and connection seeking, which justifies the predicative power of social moralities dimension for the crying as an indicator of mental strength.

To explain the predictive power of personality transcendence, especially it's dimensions of social moralities, spiritual beliefs, and peak experiences for the crying as an indicator of natural emotions, we can point out the findings of psychology of emotions that introduce the safe way of expression of emotions, and indicate that crying in negative situation such as the death of beloved one is not only normal but also natural and even necessary. Natural crying may be normal with respect to its causative events, which is common among most people with common fate, social communication, and connection. Transcended individuals feel connection with environment and others, their connection seeking sense is stronger than the non-transcended individuals. Therefore, it can be stated that natural crying relatively shows common relation and connection seeking sense among people. With regard to the facts that; some of the effective factors in natural crying is connection seeking sense, socialism, and realization of feeling of others, and that one of the major factors in seeking transcendence is moving beyond one's concerns and assisting others, we could justify and explain the relationship between social moralities as one of the dimensions of personality transcendence and natural crying.

Although generalization of the present research should be performed cautiously by taking the limitations into considerations due to the newness of the topic and culture dependency of both issues of 'crying' and 'personality transcendence' and its focus on the students within a specific range of age, the obvious relationship between personality transcendence and different types of crying in adults, especially predictive power of certain dimensions of personality transcendence for each kind of adult crying, provides a new perspective on transcendence, positive and negative emotions, their relationship with mental health, and paves the way for new studies on these topics. Therefore, it is proposed to study the topics such as; the relationship between different types of adults crying with mental health and emotional well-being, different reasons for crying with the way of reaction to others crying, personality transcendence with mental health, different reasons of crying with and the ability of emotional adjustment.

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